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First draft dictated as
of 28 & 29 October 1962.

14 November 1962

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Mission to Paris

1. The special party departed Andrews Air Force Base 21 October at 1145-EDT. It consisted of Mr. Dean Acheson, the President's special emissary to President De Gaulle, Ambassador Dowling, Chester L. Cooper, R. Jack Smith, Edward Buck (courier), and myself, of the Central Intelligence Agency.

2. The first briefing we undertook was on the plane when we unpacked our materials, including one set of graphics, and read Messrs. Acheson and Dowling in on the full-story of the military buildup in Cuba. They in turn informed us as to their instructions, a matter concerning which we had been in complete ignorance.

3. Ambassador Bruce and Archie Roosevelt, [REDACTED] met us at Greenham Common AFB (a SAC base). While the plane was refueling, all of us met in the Commander's command post. Ambassador Bruce and Mr. Roosevelt were given a preliminary briefing.

4. Mr. Acheson and I flew on to Evreux where we were met by Cecil Lyon, Ambassador Finletter, and [REDACTED] [REDACTED] E

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Paris, and an armed courier. It was then about 0130 local time. Mr. Acheson, with Messrs. Lyon and Finletter, proceeded directly to Lyon's residence. [REDACTED] courier, and I went to the Embassy to put the materials in the vault. E

5. 22 October. On this day I conducted or participated in three briefings, as follows:

(a) Meeting With US Officials

A working luncheon at Mr. Lyon's house.

Present were: Lyon, Norbert Anschutz of the Embassy, Mr. Acheson, Ambassador Finletter, US representative to NAC; Minister Durbrow, Deputy US representative to NAC; Minister Lawrence Levy, Defense Department representative to NAC; General J. P. McConnell, USAF Deputy CincEur; General James Moore, USA Chief of Staff, SacEur; Walter Stoessel, Polad, SacEur; Rear Admiral J. M. Lee, USN, ISA, Department of Defense; [REDACTED] E

[REDACTED] I briefed in considerable detail, taking as much as half an hour. I had all the briefing materials with me. The two generals were obviously much interested in the technical military aspects of the Cuba buildup. Both of them took very extensive notes throughout. (General Norstad was in the UK.)

After the briefing, General Moore brought up for discussion the matter of "alerting" US forces in Europe and putting NATO forces into a "condition of

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increased vigilance." He indicated he had been in touch with General Norsted on the draft of a message from CineBur to NATO Commanders in Europe.

(b) Meeting With President de Gaulle At the Elysee Palace

At 4:40 [redacted] appeared at Mr. Lyon's residence where two modest automobiles from the Elysee Palace awaited us. Mr. Acheson and Mr. Lyon, with a presidential escort officer, took one; [redacted] the other. We entered the Elysee through the regular entrance on the Rue du Faubourg St. Honore. I do not believe that there had been any special measures to clear the street of spectators but there was scarcely anyone within 50 yards of the entrance who was not in some kind of uniform. Once within the first courtyard we followed a tortuous course from court to inner court to inner court and were finally brought up to an unprepossessing doorway under guard. We proceeded down small corridors, up small stairways, through more corridors and stairways until we finally fetched up at a large room adjoining the President's private office. My guess is that if this were not the Cabinet Room it served some such purpose. There was a very large oval table which would have seated perhaps 20 people. The four Americans and the escort officer were here joined by another Frenchman

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who turned out to be an emergency interpreter. After a few minutes' wait -- which would have been a minute or so after 5 -- Mr. Lyon and Mr. Acheson were ushered into the General's office. Mr. Lyon has reported on what took place by cable. (State from Paris, No. 1901, dated 22 Oct 62.) [REDACTED] waited for perhaps 20 minutes then the two of us were invited in. III

The Presidential presence is quite something. I was, of course, prepared for his vast height but not for his bulk. He is surely one of the largest men alive. My second impression was, of course, his eyes which lie behind at least a half an inch of glass.

He had risen from his small desk -- not much larger than our photographs -- and gravely shook hands with both of us. He gave me the nod to begin. My topic sentence was something like: "Mr. President, the subject of this briefing is the recent military build-up in Cuba which began during the early summer on a primarily defensive level and has now taken on a demonstrably offensive quality. I refer principally to the recent emplacement of 1100 and 2200-mile surface to surface ballistic missiles capable of carrying multimegaton warheads." Claude le Bel who had been Minister in the French Embassy in Washington for a number of years acted as interpreter.

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[REDACTED] the large photograph of the map of Cuba which I put before the General. Still standing, he bent over it as I began to talk about the defensive phase. I mentioned first the arrival of large numbers of Soviet personnel, quantities of transportation, communications and electronic equipment. Next I came to the SAMs, pointing out the SAM symbol on the map. To my great comfort he at once identified the symbol and with his own finger pointed to a number of the others. I then showed him the photograph of a SAM site which he seemingly identified at once. I passed on the photograph of Santa Clara airfield, pointing out the MIG-21s. There was a reading glass which he picked up and put into the proper position, looked at the swept-wing aircraft, and indicated that this was a remarkable photograph. I quickly showed him the Komars and the surface-to-surface cruise missiles. The word "cruise" was the only technical term Le Bel did not cope with instantly. He snapped a finger in annoyance and then realized that salvation lay on the graphic itself for this photograph had as an inset a diagram of the little winged missile.

I then indicated that I would pass to the offensive phase, showed him the IL-28 crates being carried as deck cargo, showed him the San Julian airfield,

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pointed out the crates, the assembled IL-28 and the two uncrated fuselages. Again he picked up the reading glass and examined the picture carefully. I then went to MR-1 at San Cristobal and the MR site at Sagua la Grande. Next came the IR site at Guanajay. Coming back to the map again I toted up the number of confirmed sites, the number of probables plus the possibles at Remedios. I then went over our estimates of degree of readiness and gave him a worst-case estimate as of the moment of speaking and another worst case as of early 1963. I discussed briefly nuclear warheads, the fact that we could not positively identify any but noted the high degree of probability that they were in Cuba and the highly suspicious storage areas were being readied. I called his attention to the storage sites at Guanajay. I noted our estimate of the yield of these warheads as two to three megatons for the MRs and three to five for the IRs. I closed with a reminder that as of early 1963 my worst case estimate could augment present Soviet first strike capabilities with missiles by some 50%.

Not once in the course of my briefing was there any hint of incredulity on the part of the General. If

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Copy of Rehearsal
He was not perfectly satisfied that the pictures were scenes from Cuba and the weapons those which I asserted them to be, he gave me no inkling of doubt. Furthermore, if he had expressed doubts to Mr. Acheson and Mr. Lyon, I am sure they would have reported it.*

Mr. Acheson and Mr. Lyon followed in a few minutes. We all of us waited in the big room until some other visitors were out of the way and then proceeded as we had come in. I do not believe that Mr. Acheson was recognized by anyone but insiders from the moment he left Lyon's house until the moment he returned. Obviously I was not.

*After I had completed the first draft of this memorandum I saw Mr. Acheson who told me the following about his discussion with De Gaulle. After he had conveyed his message he told the General that there was an intelligence officer waiting outside to brief him on the evidence. General de Gaulle's response was that he needed no such evidence; he was satisfied with Mr. Acheson's account; after all, President Kennedy obviously would not have sent a man of Mr. Acheson's eminence to give him misinformation.

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(c) Meeting with the North Atlantic Council

During the day the station received the USIB-approved briefing note to be read to the NAC. Mr. Acheson got a copy and had read it. Meanwhile we hopefully awaited the full text of the speech which the President would deliver at midnight local time. The NAC meeting was scheduled for 10 PM. By the time I had to leave the Embassy only Part 1 of 4 had been received.

Once again to Mr. Lyon's residence where I met Mr. Acheson and Mr. Durbrow and proceeded in Mr. Durbrow's automobile to the NATO building. No one was in the lobby when we arrived and Mr. Acheson reached Mr. Finletter's office unobserved. General Moore, Mr. Levy and Mr. Stoessel were there. There was some conversation about General Norstad's message to the NATO commanders in Europe and it was agreed that General Moore would come down to the meeting but would wait in an anteroom until called. Mr. Acheson, Mr. Finletter and I entered the roomful of permanent representatives and shook hands all the way around. The Acting Chairman was Colonna of Italy. He introduced Mr. Acheson as needing no introduction to the group, noting that he was on a special mission for the President of the US. Mr. Acheson sat at the right of the Chairman. I sat at his right and

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Mr. Finletter at my right. Mr. Acheson began by briefly discussing the nature of our mission, read some excerpts from the portion of the President's speech that he had at hand and then indicating that he wished to read a statement, introduced me as Assistant Director, CIA, who was there to answer questions when he finished reading his prepared text. He then read the text. There were a few questions on the estimated performance of the MRs and IRs, a general question about their state of readiness, and after the meeting an aide of the German permanent representative followed us to Mr. Finletter's office to ask the estimated yield of the warheads. I indicated low multimegaton. There was no question remotely bearing upon sources and methods, and there were, of course, as per USIB instructions, no graphics whatever with one exception. I passed around the map from GNAIC, JAIIC, NPIC report of 19 October. I had cut this from my own copy and cut all the code words and designation of classification off it. Some member of the North Atlantic Council now has a souvenir; it never came back. I had also removed the map of Cuba which showed how the SAMs covered air space. This I kept securely in my pocket throughout. Not only were

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This was a map
of the US & S. h
Cuba showing on
the US the range
of the MRs & IRs.
(This was the
map with
US and Miss.
on it) - was
classified only
because whole
Sally was
classified as
a function
of its existence.
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there no questions about the sources of our information but no questions whatever to indicate any doubt that Mr. Acheson's story was not in fact a true story.

I do not know what would have developed had M. de Starke not changed the subject. It seems that as he was on his way home at 7:30 that evening he had heard on his radio that General Norstad had on his own authority put all NATO forces on an alert. He, rushing on as if he were in possession of the truth, had some very acid remarks about issuing such orders without consulting this body. After all, he mused, was it not for just such matters that this body existed? Before anyone could put him to rights he was joined by the representative of the Netherlands who said much the same thing advertizing to the necessity to consult with even the small powers. No one knows how long this would have gone on had not Mr. Finletter insisted on the Chairman's attention and said that General Moore was in the outer office with a statement which he felt would clarify the situation. No one has ever had it so good as General Moore. He came into the meeting and speedily read the text of what General Norstad had sent to the NATO commanders. The word "alert", of course, did not appear in it anywhere. The commanders were merely urged

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to a position of vigilance, the most drastic part of which was increased intelligence activities. M. de Starke, well back on his heels, did not exactly apologize, but did the next thing to it. He said to the Chair that he wished to withdraw his remarks and was joined in this sentiment by the Netherlands. Contribution was apparently quite deep because at this moment the Netherlander said, turning to Mr. Acheson, something like, "Given this state of affairs, what do you wish us to do?" M. de Starke re-echoed the sentiment. One or two others joined in.

Mr. Acheson, in great good humor, indicated that if he were Secretary of State of the United States, he would give them the benefit of his thinking on the matter, but since he was no more than a private citizen, he would offer no suggestions. Some closing phrase of his deflected the conversation to the forthcoming discussions in the OAS and the UN Security Council. About this time M. de Starke, looking at the clock and seeing that he had 20 minutes to alert his government to the President's speech, moved for adjournment. All were in accord and the room emptied very, very promptly.

We returned to Mr. Finletter's office briefly and then went down to the front door. There Mr. Acheson's cover was penetrated. Doty of the New York Times and a

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CSS man were loitering in the lobby and immediately recognized him.

I returned to the Embassy to stow the documents and heard the last third of the President's speech. This was the longest day.

6. 23 October. I could have returned to Headquarters this day but was given to understand that Headquarters wished me to brief General Jacquier and his top staff at the SUREC.

[REDACTED] I arrived at SUREC about one o'clock and had luncheon with the two officers. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The five of us then went to General Jacquier's office, shook hands and went with him to a small room next door which had a good sized table in it. The officers present were those who had been previously cleared for sensitive intelligence. [REDACTED] went through the briefing with the graphics in considerable detail. General Jacquier's English is, of course, excellent, [REDACTED] and I did put the briefing into French for some of the others. Here again, there was absolutely no hint of doubt with respect to the genuineness of the photographs. There was no question even to the photographs of the IR site and the S/S cruise missiles, which to be sure required more faith even than good eyesight.

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a. The Briefing for the French Press

We returned to the Embassy by about 3:30 to find that USIB had authorized the briefing of the French Press, had supplied a briefing text and instructions with respect to the use of the graphics. Mr. Lyon, the DCM, had his doubts about the desirability of this action. I think his principal concern was how the President of the Republic would react when, next morning, he realized that things told to him in terms of utmost secrecy and by a man of Mr. Acheson's eminence, within 36 hours had been dumped into the public domain. He worried over this decision until it seemed too late to get the news into the morning papers. This I judged to have been the estimate of John Mowinkle, the USIA man. It was further decided to call a Press conference for 10:30 the next morning. Mowinkle himself would not do the briefing but would entrust the job to a young man named Lowe who had a greater familiarity with military matters than Mowinkle himself. It was further decided, and this was entirely satisfactory with me, that I would make no appearance before the newspaper men but would confine my activities to reading Lowe in on the subject and making sure that the graphics were keyed into his spoken statement in a foolproof manner.

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It will be recalled that USIB's instructions re this briefing were as follows: the briefer was to follow a USIB-approved text which was at hand. The briefer was to refer to certain stipulated graphics. The number was perhaps no more than half of the total number of graphics in the kit. All place names, locational data, and numbers were to be removed from the graphics. Members of the Press could study the graphics but could not reproduce them. Graphics were not to be allowed outside the Embassy building.

In the light of these instructions I personally selected the graphics as indicated, cut off the headings at the top of the prints, removed the little box in each photograph which contained the orientation map of Cuba with its designating arrow, the classification, and where indicated obliterated locational information and numbers.

Two graphics had to be improvised. These were a map of the Western Hemisphere showing approximate ranges of the MRs and IRs and a map of Cuba showing what Cuban air space was under protection of the SAMs.

I went over the briefing note carefully, patched up a needless obscurity in paragraph G and keyed the graphics to the text.

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7. 24 October.

(a) With my breakfast arrived a copy of the Paris edition of the New York Herald Tribune. To my very considerable surprise, smack in the middle of the top half of the front page and three or four columns wide, was the photograph of the SAM site referred to in paragraph 6 of the briefing note. A few minutes later, upon arrival at the Embassy, I was informed that the whole kit of photographs had been released to the British Press the night before, that they were appearing in the London papers this morning and indeed had appeared on two British TV programs last night. A few minutes later I was shown two Paris morning papers, one of which carried the SAM site above mentioned, the other, the picture of the SAM support area which I had not been authorized even to show to the French Press. I conferred with [redacted] as to the best procedure and [redacted] E we agreed that I should call Washington for permission to release reproductions of the graphics which were to be shown to the French Press at 10:30 this morning. There was some difficulty in getting through to Washington and it was not until about 9:50 AM local time that I reached the CIA Watch Office. Ten or fifteen minutes later they called back authorizing the release if OK with the DCM. I promptly conferred with Mr. Lyon who,

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still with some reluctance, authorized the release of four pictures. An Embassy pressman accordingly scotch taped the four pictures in question (MR-1, IR-1, the IL-26s at San Julian and the MiGs at Santa Clara) to the floor and photographed them with a hand-held 35 mm camera using only natural light. I did not see the results but I can imagine most French newspaper readers had much to take on faith when they saw what appeared in the afternoon papers.

(b) Mr. Lowe of USIS did the briefing in Mr. Mowinkle's presence. As per prior decision, I was not present. I have no idea what newspapers were represented nor the names of their representatives.

(c) At about 11 AM, having been in touch with Colonel Sherrard, the G-2 at EUCOM, [REDACTED] I went out to EUCOM to give him the word. The only news EUCOM had received thus far regarding the situation in Cuba was what General McConnell had reported on the basis of my briefing of 22 October.

Colonel Sherrard took [REDACTED] Colonel Roland Spritzer, USMC, and me to the Senior Officers' Mess for lunch and I answered questions put to me by General McConnell and others. Shortly thereafter in a briefing room I ran through the briefing

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in detail with about 20 senior officers of EUCOM. I did not have the graphics. [redacted] returned straightway to Paris, largely for me to prepare myself for a meeting with Andre Fontaine of Le Monde.

(d) As is well known, Le Monde is France's leading afternoon paper. For some peculiar reason understood only by the French, it is dated one day after its appearance. Thus the issue appearing in the afternoon of 22 October bears the date 23 October.

(e) Fontaine had had time to hear and study the President's speech of midnight, 21 October, and to write an unsympathetic front page column on US policy toward Cuba. His articles are usually signed; this one was not. The ^{2nd} paragraph banged into the credibility of the evidence. "One would like to be sure of the accuracy of the information" upon which the President has acted. "But unhappily, experience shows that the American intelligence services sometimes make mistakes." This set the tone. Later on he again obliquely challenged the evidence in the fourth paragraph which contains the sentence, "If the Russians have not really delivered and do not have the intention of delivering...." In short, M. Fontaine was from

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Missouri and had rather persuasively set forth his doubts about the evidence and his views -- totally unsympathetic to the US -- for the edification of France's best educated and probably most conservative reading elite.

(x) Mowinkle who knew Fontaine well was most anxious that I see Fontaine and go over the script and graphics with him. The DCM agreed. I was presented to Fontaine under a pseudo as a Department of Defense civilian temporarily in Paris. Accordingly I gave him the word.

(g) I began by calling his attention to the fact that neither he nor I were expert enough in the PI's art to identify the terrain as Cuban or some of the weapons and sites as to what they really were. I told him that if he thought that I was about to embark upon a snow job with fabricated graphics I was prepared to call it off right there; that if ^{he} were willing to take on faith the fact that this countryside was Cuban and the weapons in fact what I said they were, we would proceed. Interestingly, he then said, "No. I am prepared to believe you because Castro himself in a speech of yesterday proclaimed that American aircraft had been

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violating Cuban air space. This is good enough evidence for me to believe that you have been overflying Cuba and photographing it from the air." With these formalities over, I ran through the exercise with the ^{sanitized} pictures. Almost the only question he asked was the altitude from which the pictures were taken. He presumed that this was secret. I indicated that it was indeed secret and let it go at that. I left Paris before Le Monde, dated 26 October, was printed. I would be interested in seeing how much of the briefing stuck. (Later - Arrive 12 Lhr 6-3
4 Monde L 26 Oct 6-3)

(h) Ambassador Bohlen had arrived at Le Havre on the night of 23-24 October. He had driven to Paris with one of the Embassy officers during the 24th and had gone straight to the residence. We received a message during the day that he wanted me to give him the briefing and would I be available to come to the residence at 7 PM. Paris evening traffic being what it is [REDACTED] I left for the residence at 6:30. We arrived on the tick of 7. The DCN arrived a few minutes later. [REDACTED] I ran through the briefing and talked generally with the Ambassador and Mr. Lyon until about 8:30. The Ambassador indicated that he would like to see me the next morning shortly before 9.

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(i) It was during these late afternoon hours of 24 October that [REDACTED] received the message from Headquarters requesting my speedy return. The transportation people checked on space available and discovered that the best that could be done was a DC-6 or -7 out of Amsterdam late that night. [REDACTED] decided that in the light of Mr. Bohlen's request that I see him in the morning I would be wiser to spend the night in Paris, see Bohlen, and catch a noon TWA flight which had its own connector between Idlewild and Washington.

(j) Accordingly I did just this. In my final meeting with Mr. Bohlen two matters are of high importance. One, his feeling that the Soviets would not like one bit to have Russians killed in Cuba. "They are a primitive people, they don't like this sort of thing and in the event that Russians are killed we should be prepared for a very direct and strong response." The other, his very great interest in being kept up to date with the progress of the Soviet buildup in Cuba. After all, his information was almost a week old upon his arrival in Paris.

(k) Bad weather in Europe delayed the departure of TWA Flight 803 until about 2 PM. Because of head

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winds ranging from 110 to 140 knots it took eight hours to make the flight from Paris to Idlewild and it did not arrive in Washington until 8 PM.

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SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

Orig +1 - M. Sheldon

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